

OPINIONS

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: E-mail letters to letters@enquirer.com, or send to Enquirer Opinions Page, 312 Elm St., Cincinnati, OH 45202; e-mail is preferred. Include your name, address, community and day phone. Letters may be edited for space and clarity, and may be published or distributed in print, electronic or other forms. To comment online: Cincinnati.Com/blogs/letters

'YOUR VOICE' GUEST COLUMN: Send your column of 300 words or fewer, with a photo and a sentence about yourself (community, occupation, etc.), to letters@enquirer.com. "Your voice" in the subject line.

■ GUEST COLUMN: STEVE MACCONNELL

Women's home adds much to Downtown

In the early 1900s the Taft family helped Cincinnati Union Bethel build the Anna Louise Inn because they recognized the need for safe and affordable housing for women from rural areas coming into the city to work.



In 1909, the Inn opened and was filled to capacity; the residents worked as bookkeepers, stenographers or telephone operators.

Today, the jobs are different, but the women's needs for safe and affordable housing are just as great. A woman earning minimum wage deserves a safe home. A woman on a fixed income deserves a safe home. Any woman deserves a safe home. The Anna Louise Inn provides that.

Cincinnati Union Bethel has run the Anna Louise Inn for more than 100 years. In that time, we have watched our neighborhood develop – the creation of Lytle Park, a new highway, a renovated Guilford

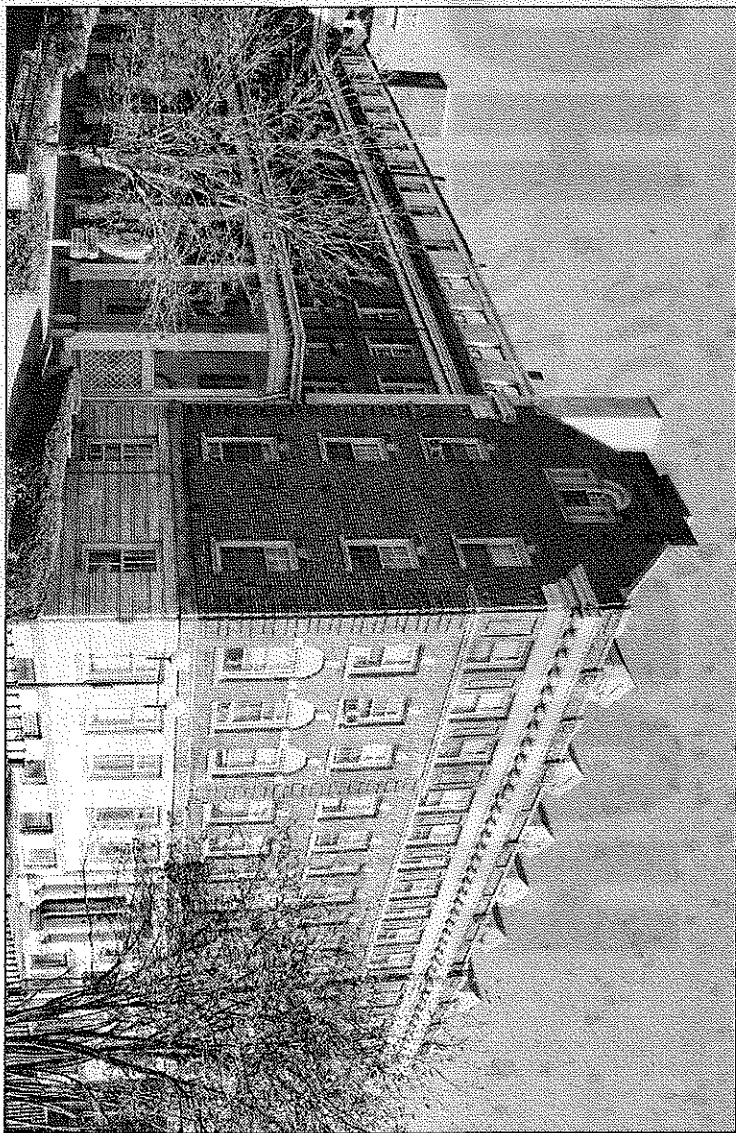
school into an office building; the Park Place condos, and most recently, the renovation of an apartment building into a hotel. All this development has happened while we have been here, quietly serving our clients.

And now, by renovating the Inn, we are making her more majestic and wonderful, preserving her for future generations of women in need and to honor the Taft family's vision.

The Inn continues to contribute to the vibrancy and history of this downtown urban neighborhood. That is why we welcome the continuing development of the Lytle Park district. Our residents deserve a safe neighborhood and they have that here. They are close enough to walk downtown, or across the river into Northern Kentucky. They are near bus stops, and they are close to a beautiful park to sit and have lunch. This is their home.

Representatives from Western & Southern have suggested that this home is better suited for wealthier people by converting the Inn into a high-rise condominium building. We disagree.

We own the Anna Louise Inn. Western & Southern could have



The Anna Louise Inn, founded in 1909, houses approximately 250 single women each year. Owners are hoping to renovate the building with federal funds set aside for affordable housing projects.

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made a serious offer to buy the building and chose not to. We have since found a better solution.

The funds we have secured for renovation of the Inn include primarily federal dollars set aside specifically for affordable housing projects. If not spent on the Inn, they will be spent elsewhere. They will not be saved and returned to taxpayers. Public agencies allocated these dollars based on a public and competitive process. The Anna Louise Inn was a top-ranking project in its category.

It is good for Cincinnati, and for the Lytle Park neighborhood, that these funds will be spent to preserve the Anna Louise Inn and further its mission to serve women in need. The Anna Louise Inn contributes to the economic vitality of our neighborhood and city. The renovation will create jobs. Our residents live here, and have lived here for years. They work downtown; they shop downtown; they eat downtown. For more than 100 years they have been good neighbors, supporting the local economy.

Successful center city economic development is about using the best models where market rate and affordable housing co-exist. The Lytle Park District has that. The Phelps Apartments, Park Place, many other market rate condominiums and apartments and the Anna Louise Inn have lived in harmony for years.

The Anna Louise Inn has a rich, proud and successful history and promising future right where we are and right where the Taft family wanted us.